



Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

eastern half of Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

brook silverside

Labidesthes sicculus

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Atheriniformes
Family:	Atherinidae

Features

The brook silverside is 2 1/2 to four inches long. The body walls are nearly clear enough to see through. It has a forked tail, no lateral line (sensory organ on the side of the fish), large eyes, and two dorsal fins, the first with spines. The top of its head is flattened and the mouth is turned upward. It has a green back, a silver stripe on the side, and a white belly.

Natural History

The brook silverside lives in lakes, ponds, creeks, and rivers, usually in clear, warm water with little current. It eats insects and zooplankton. It swims near the surface in large schools. It may jump out of the water, gliding through the air for short distances, if disturbed. This fish is active during the day and on bright nights. It spawns from late May to early August. Eggs are deposited over gravel or submerged plants. Each egg has a sticky string that will attach to the first object it touches as it drifts. Eggs hatch in about eight days. The brook silverside matures, spawns, and dies by the end of its second summer of life.